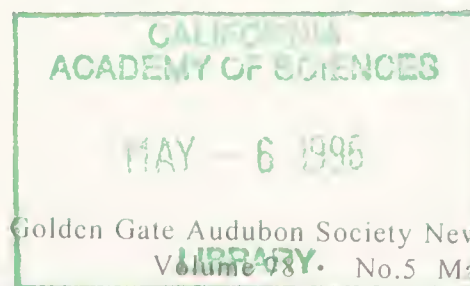




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The Gull



Golden Gate Audubon Society Newsletter
Volume 18 No. 5 May 1996

Good Things Do Happen

**May Meeting:
Panama with Dan
Evans**
see back page

**Back Yard Birder
Birding Books For
Sale**
page 43

Observations
page 44

**Alexander Skutch
Film
Bird Box Update
Gull Editor Wanted**
page 45

Field Trips Calendar
page 46

**Audubon Radio
Bird Seed Available**
page 47

For those of us concerned with the future of our natural world it has not been an easy year. Attacks in Washington, D.C. on the Clean Water Act, wetlands and the Endangered Species Act were mirrored here in California with attacks on the California Endangered Species Act and on other environmental laws.

GGAS has responded to these attacks by writing letters to our legislators and sending you action alerts to encourage you to write your legislators. Our Armchair Activist program gives you the opportunity to write one letter a month in defense of our natural world (if you are not on our Armchair Activist mailing list give us a call at the Office, 510-843-2222.)

Sometimes it takes more than letters. For example, when Governor Wilson attempted to create exemptions to the California Endangered Species Act that would have rendered the Act meaningless, GGAS joined in a **successful** lawsuit that overturned the governor's misguided efforts.

But threats to our environment do not happen only in Washington and Sacramento. Locally, we have been very active in preserving and restoring our Bay Area wildlife habitats. Below we outline some of our efforts over the last year.

Oakland

We start off our tale with a happy ending, an unusual but pleasant occurrence in the environmental world.

Thanks to the efforts of many citizens in Oakland, including our own Conservation Committee member Hazel Houston, Dunsmuir Ridge is now saved forever. This oak-lined ridge was once the dream in developers' eyes, but unceasing action by Hazel and others convinced the City of Oakland to preserve this ridge.

Elsewhere in Oakland, our restoration efforts at Arrowhead Marsh, located next to the Oakland Airport in San Leandro Bay, are in full swing and, after many meetings, a draft restoration plan is about to be released. This plan will lead to the restoration of about 60 acres of wetlands—24 acres of tidal marsh designed as breeding habitat for the endangered California Clapper Rail, and 34 acres of seasonal wetlands for shorebirds and waterfowl. An additional 10 acres of uplands will provide a buffer zone and habitat for wetland-associated species, including the Burrowing Owl.

All of this is, of course, the result of our 8-year-long series of successful lawsuits against the Port of Oakland and the Army Corps of Engineers over the Port's unauthorized filling of wetlands at both the Airport and on the Arrowhead Marsh site. Once a state wildlife sanctuary, San Leandro Bay has been the subject of such degradation and development that only 76 acres of tidal wetlands remain. Never again will it have the 2600 acres of lush tidal marsh, teeming with wildlife, that could be found there in the early 1900's. But, as a result of our lawsuits, we are bringing back another 60 acres of wetlands. The birds will appreciate it, and so will we.

Finally, as an expression of our continuing interest in preserving and enhancing the wildlife values of Lake Merritt, the nation's oldest wildlife refuge, we have given the Lake Merritt Institute a grant of \$5000 which will allow them to continue their efforts to restore wetlands in the lake. We are urging them to call the wetlands the Paul Covel Marsh. Paul was one of our chapter's most dedicated members and was the Lake Merritt Naturalist for many years. We will continue to work closely with the Institute to accomplish this wetlands goal.

Alameda

Over the opposition of those who abhor open space and cannot see the benefits of wildlife preservation, the Alameda Redevelopment and Reuse Authority voted to include a National Wildlife Refuge as part of its long range plan for the closing Alameda Naval Air Station. Unfortunately, the Reuse Authority recommended a refuge of only 390 acres. Thus is 200 acres less than that originally requested by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and over 100 acres less than the Service's final determination of a 525 acre refuge, a number that was reached in a compromise with the Alameda Base Reuse Advisory Group.

Seven of the most eminent California Least Tern scientists have signed a letter stating that any refuge smaller than the original refuge proposal threatens the survival not only of the Alameda Least Tern colony, but of the entire subspecies.

Obviously, we are very disappointed in this 390-acre proposal, and are working to see that the larger refuge is adopted. Nonetheless, we are extremely pleased that a refuge will exist on the Alameda Naval Air Station site. Through this refuge, the endangered California Least Tern, the endangered California Brown Pelican and the largest breeding colony of Caspian Terns on the West Coast will all have a chance for survival.

All of this has come about in large part because GGAS held a Symposium that alerted everyone to the immense wildlife values on the Air Station and published a study showing that the refuge could bring over \$15 million in tourist dollars to the Bay Area.

Albany

We have continued our efforts to preserve the "Albany Mudflats" for shorebirds and waterfowl. These mudflats, located just north of Golden Gate Fields, provide foraging habitat for up to 7000 shorebirds at any one time, second only to the Emeryville Crescent in the Central S. F. Bay. Bay Trail advocates have pushed for the Bay Trail to pass within three feet, in some cases, of the shorebird habitat. Scientific studies have shown that human intrusion into shorebird habitat causes the shore-

birds to flush (fly away from the intruders) or to stop feeding and watch the passers-by. This is of particular importance during migration and effectively amounts to a loss of habitat, since the shorebirds' greatest need when they are here is to eat in order to replenish the energy reserves they expended on their migratory flights.

Lead by Conservation Committee member Steve Granholm, we have succeeded in getting solid fencing along much of the trail, and are seeking to get similar fencing along a newly-proposed section of the trail in order to avoid flushing the birds.

While the human enjoyment of the trail may be reduced, we humans have over one hundred miles of shoreline trails to enjoy, while the shorebirds and waterfowl have little choice about where they can feed.

San Francisco

Crissy Field in the Presidio once was the site of a unique lagoon/wetland complex, but the area was filled by early settlers. With the completion of the Golden Gate National Recreation Area Master Plan, the dream of restoring those wetlands came closer to reality. Then the folks who let their dogs walk without leashes on the Crissy Field site got all excited, accused the Park Service of taking away their rights to walk their dogs, and vociferously opposed the wetlands. We launched a letter-writing campaign to show the National Park Service that the dog-walkers represented a very small, isolated part of our community and that the larger part of society welcomed wetland restoration. Many people responded and thanks to their letters of support, it looks like a Crissy Fields wetland may indeed return to San Francisco. Good work and thanks.

Lake Merced is drying up. Due to increased water usage, among other reasons, the lake's level has been dropping. While there is dispute over which level the lake should be kept at, there is no disputing that it occasionally gets too low. Flush with water during our last two very rainy seasons, the San Francisco Water Department has wanted to add water to Lake Merced. The problem was they wanted to add it during

the waterbird breeding season. Raising the lake level at this time would probably drown the young waterbirds in their nests. We alerted the district to this problem, reminding them that such an act would require environmental review, and they agreed to add the water after the breeding season. A happy ending again.

It's not all happy endings. Wetlands continue to get filled. Wildlife habitat continues to disappear at an alarming rate around the Bay Area, particularly in Contra Costa county, and bird populations remain threatened.

New events are taking place over the issue of Bay/Delta water diversions. To refresh your memory, the issue here is the diversion of so much freshwater from the Sacramento Delta (most of it going to agriculture and southern California) that the freshwater Suisun marshes were turning into salt marshes and many fish species including salmon, delta smelt and others were threatened with extinction.

Two GGAS lawsuits, one against the EPA and one against the State Water Resources Control Board, forced the EPA to set fairly strong freshwater standards for the Bay. There was some hope that the threatened extinction of the fish species could be avoided. But the State snared the EPA into a new Bay/Delta process (called the CALFED process) and the EPA tentatively agreed to remove its standards.

The new process has resulted in ten alternative solutions most of which have some connection with our old nemesis, THE PERIPHERAL CANAL. Our lawyers recently sent the EPA a letter stating our belief that they could not legally retract their standards at this time. We are also making comments on the new alternative solutions. Stay tuned, the fate of our estuary remains hanging in the balance.

But as you have read earlier in this article, good things do happen and with your help the Golden Gate Audubon Society plays a role in making sure that they do. Thanks to all of you for your support in these efforts.

There is something you can do today to help save the California Least Tern!

While we greatly appreciate Congressman Ron Dellums' strong support for the creation of an Alameda National Wildlife Refuge, we are not confident of his position on the size of the Refuge. As in all matters of this kind, politics can play a role in the decision-making process. Please write or call Congressman Dellums' office and tell him that he should support the 525-acre refuge as opposed to the 390-acre refuge. Remember, seven of the most prestigious California Least Tern scientists have written a letter stating that any alteration of the present configuration of the western end of the Air Station could threaten the Least Tern colony. A refuge of 390 acres fall far short of this goal, the west end of the Air Station actually totals about 700 acres. Congressman Ron Dellums address is:

2108 Rayburn House Office
Building

Washington, D.C. 20515,

His phone number is: 510-763-0370 and
fax number is: 202-225-9817.

Arthur Feinstein

Birding Books For Sale

A considerate member has thought of GGAS when moving and has donated to our Chapter her collection of birding books for which she has no room in her new residence. We are offering these books for sale at our office. They include many field guides and informational books on birds and some wonderful books of prints of birds including one with the beautiful prints of Louis Agassiz Fuertes.

The collection also includes a copy of William Dawson's *The Birds of California*, illustrated by Major Allan Brooks. This classic set of three volumes (the Students Edition, 1923) is in excellent condition and we are selling it for \$200 (our pricer puts its value at \$250.00).

Come by the Office (remember to call first - we're out sometimes) and have a look at these books. All purchases help GGAS continue its ongoing conservation and education programs.

Back Yard Birder

Meg Pauletich

For years we had the luxury of feeding birds without raids by squirrels. Then, in our former home, a single fox squirrel showed up, appreciated the handouts, and settled in. The word spread, and soon we had 2 pair and you can guess the rest. In our new neighborhood squirrels abound and they have welcomed our feeders with open paws. I have to admit that their athleticism, combined with their ingenuity and determination, is comical if not admirable. They lack neither nerve nor cunning and are extremely "cheeky" with their sassiness when we shoo them away. Suspending feeders from long lengths of coat hangers has slowed them down. If they brave the slippery metal and I give them a shout, they scramble in place before getting a grip to climb back up to the tree limb, resembling cartoon characters.

For Christmas we received a squirrel-proof feeder. HA!!!! It has a baffle around a metal pole which the squirrels use as a springboard to the ledge of the feeder. We've been too busy to set it elsewhere, so in the meantime our neighbors laugh at our squirrel feeder. When a pair are feasting, the feeder appears to be a fur-covered cylinder as they press against the screen to use their tongues to extract sunflower seeds.

Nearly a month went by with nary a bird, just squirrels, dining. Then, I glanced up from my dishwashing one morning and the feeder and the ground beneath it were alive with birds. A troop of Pine Siskins recognized a good deal and they have been "hanging out" (literally) on all of our feeders. Their delightful sounds fill the air as they socialize in flocks of 50 or more, quite a mob.

Pine Siskins are slim, streakier versions of their cousins the House Finches. They resemble a cross between a House Finch and their closest relative, the goldfinch. Some of them show lovely touches of yellow in the wings and at the base of their deeply notched tails. Their bills are thinner than most finches but their voices and undulating flight remind one of goldfinches. They also dangle up-

side down from thistles like their relatives. They enjoy the above in wintertime along with seeds and any insects they can find; in spring they also eat tender buds and leaves. Here in the Bay Area, we have Pine Siskin "irruptions" some winters; other years they are scarcely noticeable. Unlike bird species which will stray from their usual range in small numbers looking for food, irruptions refer to large populations of birds moving outside their normal range. Owls, woodpeckers, jays, chickadees, nuthatches, as well as northern finches are species which often "irrupt." Pine Siskins have shown up as far south as Florida.

Pine Siskins are birds of the transcontinental evergreen forest and the coniferous slopes and valleys of the western mountains, except when they invade lower latitudes. Their winter range, therefore, is highly erratic. These birds nest high in tall evergreens. The female chooses a site well away from the trunk on a horizontal limb and creates a flattish nest of twigs, roots and grass, then lines it with moss, fur, feathers. 3-4 eggs hatch after 13 days and the nestlings fledge in 14-15 days. Since siskins are social birds all year long their nests are often somewhat colonial, with as little as a few feet between nests. The male feeds the brooding female and when the eggs hatch she regurgitates the food he delivers to her into the nestlings' mouths. When feeding, these flocks of birds "work" a tree from top to bottom before moving on. Between raids on our feeders they perch, like oversized acorns, on bare oak branches.

For some unknown reason Pine Siskins along with Pine Grosbeaks, crossbills and Purple Finches have a special fondness for salt. In wintertime they are attracted to the salt used by road crews in snowy areas, making them vulnerable to auto traffic.

I'm thankful the travelling troops of Pine Siskins decided to drop by this winter and have stayed to entertain me along with those clowns, the squirrels.

Observations: March, 1996

Hugh Cotter

Birds reported during the month proved Spring is finally here, although migrants seemed slow in arriving and appeared in lesser numbers than expected at this stage of the season. By month's end, however, many of the usual species such as Costa's Hummingbirds, Grasshopper Sparrows, Western Kingbirds, and Wilson's Warblers all had shown up. In addition, many lingering over-wintering birds also continued to be seen well into this month.

Grebes to Ducks .

A summer-plumaged Red-necked Grebe was off Pacifica, SM, on March 31 (DSg). At Point Arena, MEN, the wintering Laysan Albatross was last reported on March 26. It was at about this time last year that this bird left for faraway places. It had been seen in the company of another albatross prior to its departure. Another interesting report of Laysan Albatross was one found by a jogger near Woodside, SM, on March 6, adjacent to Highway 280. The bird was taken in by rehabilitators and was released on the ocean two days later from a fishing party-boat out of Half Moon Bay. It was last seen flying strongly out to sea (to Point Arena perhaps) (PJM).

It was a quiet month for seabird reports. On the San Mateo coast, seawatching highlights from Pigeon Point on March 8 included: 1 Sooty, 2 Short-tailed and 1 Black-vented shearwaters, (the latter, incidentally, only the second seen from Pigeon Point this winter). A Least Bittern, a very rare transient in March, must have been a nice surprise for a class group at the Coyote Hills Regional Park, ALA, on March 9 (DPM).

By the end of the month most of the wintering waterfowl had moved on. Scattered reports of Eurasian Wigeon and Oldsquaw continued again from various coastal and San Francisco Bay locations. Two Harlequin Ducks were off the Farallones, March 16 (DS). In addition, reports of small groups of Blue-winged

Teal came from the south San Francisco Bay area, especially from the Palo Alto Flood Control Basin, SCL. In San Francisco the male Tufted Duck in Golden Gate Park was last reported on March 16, while at the Sunnyvale Sewer Ponds, SCL, the overwintering male there was last observed on March 9.

Raptors to Gulls

Up to 10 Swainson's Hawks at the San Luis NWR on March 9 (ADM) were presumed early migrants. Mountain Plovers in Yolo County continued into at least the middle of the month with 200 birds still being reported on March 11 (JH). Up to 5 Pacific Golden-Plovers were at the Spaletta Plateau at Point Reyes NS through most of the period, while up to 3 birds were also seen at Pigeon Point, SM, during most of the month. In Arcata, HUM, 2 Rock Sandpipers were again seen at the north jetty of Humboldt Bay on March 28. The Ruff at the Crittendon Marsh, SCL, continues to be seen while another, a Reeve, was found in Sacramento County on March 29 (ST).

The **Lesser Black-backed Gull**, over-wintering in the San Francisco South Bay, was seen once again at the Alviso Marina on March 23 (RC). However, the most interesting gull sighting of this month must surely be a report of a **Swallow-tailed Gull**, well-seen 15-20 miles SW of the Farallones (LS). This species is currently on the CRBC Supplemental List on the basis of a single record, in Monterey County, in June, 1985. There was no question in the minds of the observers (or the Bird Records' Committee members) of the identity of the bird, but some doubt as to whether this southern-hemispheric species was able to cross the equatorial doldrums without human assistance. This current report, if accepted, would therefore become the first state record. This species' normal range is in South America, breeding in the Galapagos Islands and wintering from coastal Colombia to Chile. Small num-

bers of single Gull-billed Gulls again were reported this month at various locations while a high total of 177 Black-legged Kittiwakes were seen from Pigeon Point, SM, on March 8 in addition to a Pomarine Jaeger, 14 Ancient Murrelets, 5 Marbled Murrelets, and 465 Rhinoceros Auklets the same day (RSTh).

Owls to Kingbirds

The overwintering Northern Saw-whet Owl at the Sutro Heights Park, SF, was again seen on March 5, (HF). A Common Poorwill was found on Gazos Creek Road, SM, March 13 (BM). This species occurs regularly in chaparral habitat inland in San Mateo, and is regularly seen at this location in spring.

The Eastern Phoebe was last reported at Shady Oaks Park, SCL, on March 6, while another was found at Elkhorn Slough, MTY, on March 24, (TN). In Monterey, the **Dusky-capped Flycatcher** was last reported at the Moonglow Dairy on March 24. An early Pacific Slope Flycatcher was found at the Phipps Ranch, SM, on March 13 (BM), while a Cassin's Kingbird at the Arastradero Preserve, Palo Alto, SCL, on March 10 was the only report during this last winter (TC).

Warblers to Orioles

Although no early arrival dates were available, it seemed that migrant warbler species like Wilson's Warbler turned up about on time. Lingering over-wintering species included the Lucy's Warbler at Frenchman's Creek, Half Moon Bay, last reported on March 9, and the **Yellow-throated Warbler** in Lolita, HUM, last reported on March 2. In San Francisco, the **Worm-eating Warbler** was refound again at Middle Lake in Golden Gate Park on March 14, (KM), where it remained through the end of the month, allowing many a better chance of seeing it this time. Other interesting warbler sightings during this period included a

Palm Warbler at Limantour, MRN, and Black-and-White Warblers in Eureka and at the Phipps Ranch, SM, all presumed overwintering birds.

In Placer County at least one McCown's Longspur and 2 Lapland Longspurs remained of the group seen the previous month, until at least March 13, (JH). At the Summit of Sierra Road, SCL, both a male and female Chestnut-collared Longspur were present from March 23 to the end of the month (MR). The **Rustic Bunting** near Hoopa, HUM, was last reported on March 17 and incredibly was seen that day in the company of a second bird, a female (DT). Neither bird was subsequently seen, so who knows, maybe they have paired up and remain in that vicinity. The Rusty Blackbird remained at the Phipps Ranch, Pescadero, SM, through the end of the month. A Great-tailed Grackle was present at Point Arena, MEN, from March 3 through 5 (MR), while the Orchard Oriole continued in Lolita until at least March 2.

The monthly observation column is generated from reports made to the Northern California Bird Box or to the author. Some sightings are unconfirmed and numbers of birds are often best regarded as estimates or "best guesses". In general, birds in boldface are very rare in our region, geographically or seasonally. Many of these are currently reviewed by the California Bird Records Committee (CBRC). Observers are encouraged to provide written and/or photographic documentation to the CBRC, c/o Michael Patten, P.O. Box 51959, Riverside, CA 92517-2959 for any species currently on the review list. A list of review species can also be obtained from the CBRC secretary at the address above.

Data thanks to all the observers who contributed their reports to the Northern California Bird Box.

Observers: Rita Colwell, Ted Chandic, Al Di Martini, Harry Fuller, Jim Holmes, Bert McKee, Kevin McKerrigan, Peter J Metropulos, Dan Murphy, Todd Newberry, Mike Rogers, Dan Singer (DSg), Larry Spear, Dick Spight, Scott Terrill, Ron Thorn, Dorothy Tobkin

Abbreviations for counties; ALA, Alameda; CC, Contra Costa; FRE, Fresno; HUM, Humboldt; MRN, Marin; MEN, Mendocino; MTY, Monterey; PLA, Placer; SF, San Francisco; SM, San Mateo; SCL, Santa Clara; SIS, Siskiyou; SON, Sonoma; YOL, Yolo

A Naturalist in the Rain Forest - Film on Skutch



On Saturday evening, May 11, from 7-10 p.m., the Nature Sounds Society and the Rainforest Action Network will co-present the west coast premier screening of *A Naturalist in the Rainforest*, a portrait of the legendary neotropical ornithologist, Dr. Alexander Skutch. This beautifully-filmed documentary explores the life of Dr. Skutch, and presents stunning glimpses of the many tropical plants and animals the honored naturalist has studied close to his Costa Rican home. These include colorful parrots, shimmering hummingbirds, and the Resplendent Quetzal. Dr. Skutch shares in detail his insights into tropical biology, his far-reaching philosophy, and his efforts to live and farm in harmony with the Costa Rican rainforest.

A Naturalist in the Rainforest has been widely honored for its technical excellence. Roger Tory Peterson says, "Alexander Skutch contributed more to our knowledge of the Neotropics, especially its birdlife, than anyone else. Everyone should see this fine film."

The premier is hosted by University Art Museum-Pacific Film Archive, and will take place in the George Gund Theater at 2625 Durant Ave., Berkeley. Following the screening, filmmaker Paul Feyling will make a short presentation and answer questions on his experiences in filming and producing the documentary. A reception in the lobby follows. Tickets are \$8 and go on sale at 6:30 p.m. at the door. Seating is limited. Contact Bill Gilbert at (510) 222-7860 or 222-9633 with questions.

Bird Box Update

Calling the Bird Box has become one of my weekday morning pleasures. I brew a cup of Earl Grey, sit down at the computer, flip on the screen, lay out the pens and papers that indicate productivity, and hit the speed-dial button. Sea-birds along the San Mateo coast, vagrant warblers on outer Point Reyes -- I know the voices and I share the excitement, even if I am couped up in an office in west Oakland.

But a couple of weeks ago, I found my stomach beginning to knot and my mind repeating "don't say it" as a sweet voice proceeded to give directions to a pair of Spotted Owls. Now, these are well-known Spotted Owls, but discretion has always been the order of the day when dealing with sensitive birds (owls and rails come immediately to mind). Broadcasting their whereabouts over public airways (and the Bird Box is *very* public) seems unconscionable. Those who want to know need to ask those who do. Please, consider well before announcing.

Wanted: Gull Editor

After nearly 6 years of deadlines, 3 as editor, 3 as *Observations* compiler, this editor has had enough and would like to pass the mantle along to someone (preferably 2 someones) with time and energy to spare.

The responsibilities are two-fold: **Editorial:** solicit articles; edit submitted articles (solicited and otherwise); write copy as necessary; commit all to computer. **Layout:** using one of the page make-up programs (presently it's PageMaker; others are available) lay out each issue and submit on disk to the printer.

As indicated, the job nicely divides in two, requiring people with quite different skills. At present, it's taking one person 15 to 30 hours each month to put together an issue from start to finish. This is not the ideal volunteer experience for someone who is working 40 - 50 hours a week. However, there's plenty of potential and gratification is assured.

Inquiries and applications welcome.

Field Trips Calendar

Saturday, May 4

Sunol Regional Park

Meet at 8:30 a.m. inside the park entrance at the parking lot on the left. Take I-680 south, turn off at Calaveras Rd. (the freeway sign is marked: Calaveras Rd., Dumbarton Bridge, Calif. 84). Go south (left) and follow the signs to Sunol Regional Park, about five miles. Bring lunch and liquids in preparation for a four to five mile walk. We expect to see a variety of the common breeding birds, including flycatchers, swallows, vireos and warblers. This trip is also good for wildflowers. Heavy rain cancels. Leaders: Gloria Markowitz and Ken Ackerman (415) 892-2910. \$ (*)

Saturday, May 4

Briones Regional Park - Birding By Ear

Meet at 8 a.m. at the west entrance to Briones Regional Park off Bear Creek Rd. Meet in the parking area on the left, just beyond the fee booth.

Directions: Take Hwy. 24 and exit at the Orinda turnoff. Turn left and go back under the freeway on Camino Pablo. Continue northwest about two miles to Bear Creek Rd. Turn right and go about 4.5 miles to Briones Regional Park entrance on the right (just beyond Happy Valley Rd.). Or, from the Berkeley area, cross through Tilden Regional Park on Wildcat Canyon Rd. and continue beyond Inspiration Point. Cross San Pablo Dam Rd. onto Bear Creek Rd., and go 4.5 miles to the park.

Be prepared to hike five miles through hilly terrain. Bring lunch and liquids, and a hat or sunscreen. We will study the songs and calls of common breeding birds of the East Bay. Leader: Dave Cornman. (510) 825-2106. \$ (*)

Sunday, May 5

Wildcat Canyon Regional Park

Meet at 8 a.m. by the Arlington Clubhouse on Arlington Blvd. (next to the tennis courts between Brewster Dr. and Thors Bay Rd.) in El Cerrito. From there we will make a short drive to the trailhead on Rifle Range Rd. We will encounter hills as we walk a transect of the canyon to bird in brushlands, oak woodlands, riparian streamsides and grasslands. We anticipate seeing a few late migrants, and a good representation of nesting birds including Grasshopper Sparrows and Lazuli Buntings. We will also identify common trees of the area. People with allergies should be aware that we will encounter grassy conditions. Bring lunch and liquids for a six mile hike. The trip will end at 2 p.m. Leader: Malcolm Sproul (510) 376-8945.

Wednesday, May 8

Mini-trip to Briones Regional Park

Meet at 9:30 a.m. at the west entrance to Briones Regional Park off Bear Creek Rd. Meet in the parking area on the left just beyond the fee booth. Directions: see field trip above scheduled for Briones Regional Park on Saturday, May 4. We should see Bullock's Orioles, Lark Sparrows, Ash-throated Flycatchers and

Lazuli Buntings. Leaders: Anna Wilcox (510) 351-9301, and Jean-Marie Spoelman.

Saturday, May 11

Leona Heights Open Space, Oakland (not to be confused with Leona Heights Park)

Meet at 8 a.m. in the parking lot. Take I-580 south about 1.5 miles beyond the junction with Warren Frwy. (Hwy. 13) to the Keller exit. Go east (uphill) on Keller .8 miles, passing a yellow-with-white-trim shopping complex on the right. Turn left onto Campus Drive, then a quick right onto Canyon Oaks Dr. (This seems like turning into a private parking lot for the Ridgemont Condominium Complex.) Once inside the parking lot, go left to the end, and you'll find the small East Bay Regional Parks District parking area.

We will be hiking a riparian habitat in a woodland canyon, and will return to the parking lot on the same trail. Those who wish to extend the hike in pursuit of a Rufous-crowned Sparrow should bring a lunch. Leader: Rusty Scalf (510) 523-7108. (*)

Sunday, May 12

Mountain Lake and Presidio, San Francisco.

Meet at the end of 15th Ave. (just north of Lake St.) in the parking lot of the Public Health Hospital at 8 a.m. Bring binoculars and a field guide if you have them. We expect to see three or four species of swallows plus a variety of waterbirds and landbirds during this morning walk. Beginners welcome. Leaders: Mary Louise Rosegay and Jan Andersen (415) 922-5866.

Saturday, May 18

Bouverie Audubon Preserve (near Glen Ellen).

This 400-acre preserve is known for its flowering plants (over 350 species) as well as 100 bird species.

This trip is by reservation only. Reservations must be received (mail or telephone) by May 10th at the GGAS office (address and phone number on the back page of *The Gull*.) Directions and information about meeting time and place will be mailed to participants. Leader: Docents (*)

Saturday, May 25

Tennessee Cove, Golden Gate National Recreation Area

Meet at 8:30 a.m. at trailhead. From San Francisco take Hwy. 101 north to Marin Co. and exit on Hwy. 1 toward Mill Valley and Stinson Beach. After about one quarter mile, turn left onto Tennessee Valley Rd. and continue to road end. Lunch optional for this half day trip through riparian area to the shore. Beginners welcome. Leader: Bob Hogan (415) 258-0811

Friday-Sunday, May 31-June 2

Birding by Ear in Yosemite

The lower and middle elevations of Yosemite National Park are alive with singing birds in early June. A variety of habitats support a rich diversity of birdlife, typically including seven flycatch-

ers (four Empidonax), three vireos, seven warblers, and many other species in full song and breeding plumage.

Meet at the Big Oak Flat entrance on Friday, May 31 at 3 p.m., and on Saturday, June 1 at 7 a.m. (If you arrive later Saturday morning, meet the group in Hodgdon Meadow behind the Hodgdon Meadow Group Campsites.) The meeting place is the large parking lot 100 yards inside the park entrance on Hwy. 120 (30 miles from Yosemite Valley).

Nearby campgrounds include Hodgdon Meadow (reservations required) and Crane Flat in the Park, Carlon and Middle Fork (primitive Forest Service campgrounds) on the road to Hetch Hetchy, and Sweetwater on Hwy. 120.

Lodging on Hwy. 120 includes Yosemite Gatehouse (209) 379-2260, Evergreen Lodge (209) 379-2606, Lee's Middle Fork (209) 962-7408 and Buck Meadows Lodge (209) 962-6366.

Bring warm clothes, raingear, rubber boots (wet meadows), be prepared to pack a lunch and walk about six miles. Leader: Dave Cornman (510) 825-2106. \$

Wednesday, June 12

Mini-trip to Redwood Regional Park

Meet in the park at 9:30 a.m. Take the Warren Freeway (Hwy. 13), exit onto Redwood Rd. and proceed east about three miles to Redwood Gate, southern entrance to the park. Meet just inside small parking lot on the left. We should see Black-headed Grosbeak, Swainson's Thrush, Bullock's Oriole, Solitary, Hutton's and Warbling vireos. Bring lunch. Leaders: Anna Wilcox (510) 351-9301, and Jean-Marie Spoelman.

Saturday-Sunday, June 15-16

Yuba Pass and vicinity

On Saturday, meet at 8:30 a.m. at the Yuba Pass Summit parking area (Hwy. 49), 15 miles east of Sierra City. Take I-80 to Truckee, go north on Hwy. 89 to Sierraville, and take Hwy. 49 west to Yuba Summit. (Or take Hwy. 49 northeast from Auburn for a slower but more scenic route.) We will bird the mountain areas for summer residents, including dippers, flycatchers, warblers and Calliope Hummingbirds.

On Sunday, meet at 8 a.m. at the intersection of Hwy. 49 and 89 (by the saw mill), about 1 mile north of Sattley. We will caravan to Sierra Valley looking for birds of the eastern Sierra, including White-faced Ibis,

Sandhill Cranes, Sage Thrashers, and Yellow-headed Blackbirds.

Camping is available at the following U.S. Forest Service campgrounds off Hwy. 49: Wild Plum (elev. 3300'), 2 mi. east of Sierra City; and Chapman Creek (elev. 5800'), 8 mi. east of Sierra City. Lodging is available at Sierra City: Sierra Chalet, (916) 862-1110; Buttes Motel, (916) 862-1170; Herrington's Sierra Pines, (916) 862-1151; Basset Station Motel, (916) 862-1297; Sierra Buttes Inn Motel, (916) 862-1191; and Yuba River Inn, (916) 862-1122. Leader: Peter Allen (415) 892-8063. (*)

Trips marked with \$ go to parks or other sites that require an entrance fee.

Carpooling arrangements will be attempted for trips marked (*). See below.

Problems: If you need a ride or can take a passenger, or if you need information and have difficulty reaching a field tripler, call Russ Wilson, Field Trips Committee Chair (510) 524-2399.

Plan Ahead:

Friday-Sunday, June 23-25

Lassen Volcanic National Park

Leaders: Dan and Joan Murphy (415) 564-0074. Camping at Manzanita Lake, or lodging 15 miles north of the park at Hat Creek Resort, Old Station (916) 335-7121 for reservations.

Thursday-Sunday Aug. 22-25

Backpacking to Snag Lake, Lassen Volcanic National Park

Leader: David Rice. (510) 527-7210.

For information on above trips see the June issue of *The Gull*.

Are Your Birds Hungry?

If so, if your finches and sparrows and pine siskins and juncos are all looking sad because your feeder is empty. We have the answer. The Golden Gate Audubon Office has a full range of bird seed and feeders available for purchase. Come on down and get some seed—but please call first, at 5190-843-2222, the office is not always open (Arthur goes to lots of meetings.)

Audubon Radio

Last year, the Bay Area Chapters of National Audubon Society received a settlement from Shell Oil as compensation for an oil spill several years ago at Shell Marsh in Martinez. Hoping to use the money in a way that will return the most benefit, the local chapters have decided to start a radio show, using the local airwaves to promote a better understanding of the environment and to encourage people to care for it.

The first phase of the project has begun and ideas for the show's format, content and length are being gathered. Phase II will involve putting together a number of pilot shows; Phase III will market the program to local radio stations.

The enthusiastic committee would like input and ideas from local Audubon members, including:

What would be a good name for the series?

Who would make a good host?

Who might be an interesting personality to include in a show?

Bird song will be an important component of the program -- the committee is seeking volunteers with high quality recording equipment who are interested taping bird songs for the show.

It's an exciting project; if you have ideas, enthusiasm, expertise . . . please contact Arthur Feinstein at the GGAS office.

BE AN ACTIVE GGAS MEMBER

**come to a monthly meeting
go on a field trip
lead a field trip
join a committee**

**write your congressperson
be an Armchair Activist
volunteer in the office**

**host at Audubon Canyon Ranch
persuade a friend to join**

PANAMA: OUR PARTNER IN FLIGHT

An Evening with Daniel Evans and GGAS' Panama Committee

Northbrae Community Church, 941 The Alameda, Berkeley

Thursday, May 9, 7:30 p.m.

Come and hear an update on California's Partners In Flight activities to protect migratory songbirds, and migrate south for an hour or two to see the environmental challenges facing Panama.

Several years ago, National Audubon Society, recognizing the fact that our North American songbirds' survival was dependent not just on habitat preservation on their breeding grounds and along their migratory paths, but on their wintering grounds as well, formed the Partners In Flight program, hoping to develop relationships between North American organizations and their counterparts in Middle and South America. Point Reyes Bird Observatory has been active in the program since the beginning, providing staff biologists to help census bird populations in some of these countries and more importantly to help train local biologists in censusing and banding techniques, so that they in turn can train others and carry forward this work on their own. Two years ago, Miles McKey and a number of other interested GGAS members, deeming Panama a pivotal area along the migratory corridor, set about establishing a relationship with Panama Audubon, and the Panama Committee (PanCom) was born.

Last October, GGAS sponsored PRBO Director Dr. Daniel Evans' attendance at Panama Audubon Society's International Bird Festival where, as the keynote speaker, he talked about the ecological roles that birds fill and the multiple reasons for protecting the many declining bird species.

Dan will talk about the national Partners In Flight program and specifically about what is being done in California, including PRBO's work locally and in Latin America. He will address the difficult situation facing Panama in the years ahead as the Canal Zone is transferred from American to Panamanian rule. He will be joined by members of the Panama Committee who will present slides and highlights of their November trip to Panama, and will bring us up to date on other PanCom activities.

Join us for an interesting and thought-provoking evening as we learn more about the plight of migratory birds and what is being done to save them.

ROSTER

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First Vice President Debey Zito, '96
Recording Secretary Leslie Lethridge, '96
Corresponding Secretary Pat Gannon, '96
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WELCOME NEW MEMBERS

As a member of National Audubon Society, you are automatically enrolled in the local chapter, Golden Gate Audubon Society. Chapter benefits include receipt of *The Gull*, access to field trips and programs, and the opportunity to volunteer. Call the office if you have any questions.

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